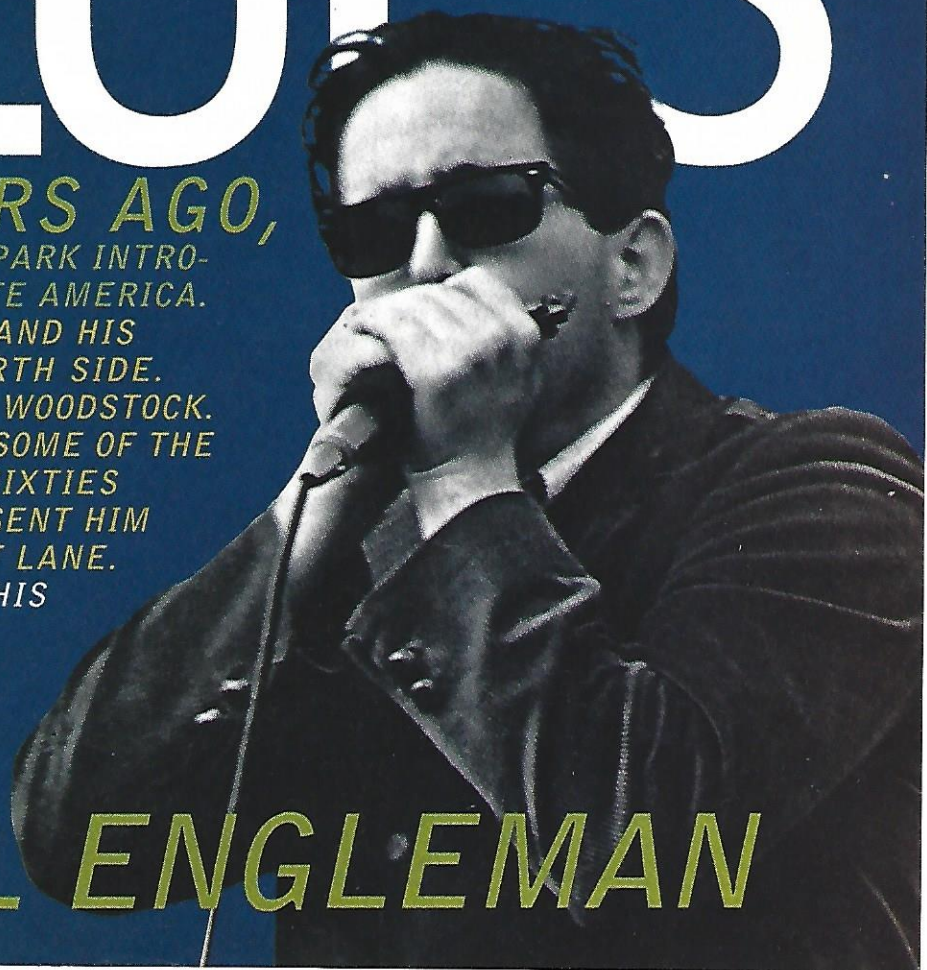


BURIED ALIVE IN THE BLUES

THIRTY YEARS AGO,
A SKINNY KID FROM HYDE PARK INTRODUCED THE BLUES TO WHITE AMERICA. FIRST PAUL BUTTERFIELD AND HIS BAND CONQUERED THE NORTH SIDE. THEN THE FILLMORE. THEN WOODSTOCK. BUTTERFIELD TURNED OUT SOME OF THE HOTTEST ALBUMS OF THE SIXTIES BEFORE DRUGS AND DRINK SENT HIM SKIDDING OUT OF THE FAST LANE. TODAY, TEN YEARS AFTER HIS DEATH, THE MAN RUINED BY FAME HAS FALLEN INTO OBSCURITY



BY PAUL ENGLEMAN

WHILE WALKING NEAR THE UNIVERSITY OF CHICAGO CAMPUS IN THE FALL OF 1960, A FRESHMAN NAMED ELVIN BISHOP NOTICED A KID HIS AGE SITTING ON A PORCH WITH A QUART OF BEER AND A GUITAR, SINGING A BLUES SONG. THE SCHOOL'S BEATNIK DAYS WERE WANING, BUT HYDE PARK COULD STILL CLAIM THE BOHEMIAN ARTS AND CULTURE OF THE COMPASS PLAYERS, A THEATRE TROUPE WITH NOTABLES LIKE MIKE NICHOLS AND ELAINE MAY, AND THE *CHICAGO*

Review, a graduate-student literary magazine whose contributor William S. Burroughs had ruffled feathers all over town.

And the streets bustled with musicians. It wasn't odd to hear blues music in Hyde Park, as blues clubs were located near the neighborhood. Even with the onset of demolition in the name of urban renewal, the music played at rent and wrecking-ball parties.

So Bishop's encounter with the young bluesman on the stoop, Paul Butterfield, wasn't strange—except that he was white. Butterfield was not a U. of C. student but a neighborhood kid, a University of Chicago Laboratory High School graduate who had excelled in track and was an all-state soccer goalie. His father was a lawyer, his mother a staffer in the registrar's office at the U. of C.

Bishop, who also played guitar, was from Tulsa, where his father worked in an aircraft plant. Bishop went to the university as a National Merit Scholar and quickly found the blues scene with the help of his first friends on campus, "the black guys who worked in the cafeteria."

Bishop and Butterfield probably talked that day about Muddy Waters, Howlin' Wolf, Little Walter Jacobs, and Smokey Smothers, guys who played at Pepper's, Smitty's, Trocadero's, and the Blue Flame—guys who soon would be sharing the stage with them. But they couldn't have known their meeting would spark a musical partnership that

would place them among the legends of the blues.

Ten years have passed since harmonica player Paul Butterfield was found dead at 44 in his North Hollywood apartment. In the decade before his death, he had fallen out of the media glare, and his name hardly comes up now. In a city that proudly celebrates its blues heritage, the fading of Butterfield's memory is even more surprising. Within music circles, he is credited not just for his own innovation and virtuosity, but for reviving Chicago blues when it was floundering and helping bring the music into the spotlight.

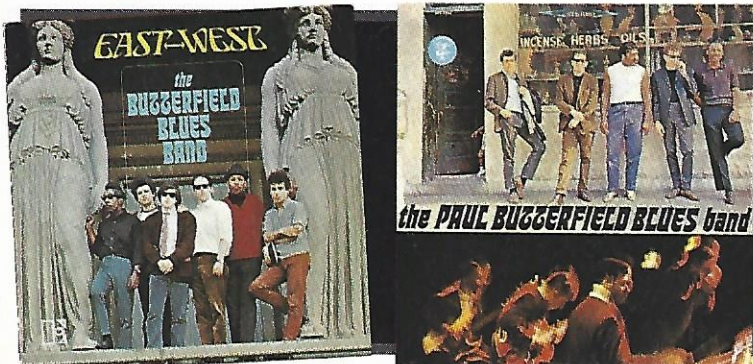
"If it hadn't been for Butterfield, the blues might not have gotten beyond the South Side," says Sam Lay, the first drummer for the Butterfield Blues Band. "There wasn't anything happening with blues before then. He opened doors that wouldn't have been opened."

FINDING WHITE MUSICIANS PLAYING blues isn't too difficult today, but they were a rare breed in the fifties, when Butterfield, a curious teenager, would venture off to predominantly black South Side blues clubs to hear the musicians who fascinated him. His apprenticeship with the masters helped him develop as a vocalist and harmonica player. By the time the Paul Butterfield Blues Band released its namesake 1965 debut album, it had become the country's first racially integrated pop group.

Ten years later, at 33, Butterfield's career had already seen a lifetime's worth of highlights. He had backed Bob Dylan's notorious appearance at the Newport Folk Festival, when the bard had shocked folk-music fans with his electric guitar. He had played to sellout crowds at the Fillmore in San Francisco, where he and his guitarist Mike Bloomfield introduced the legendary promoter Bill Graham to Waters, B. B. King, and others of their heroes. He had played to half a million at Woodstock in 1969, and at the 1976 farewell concert of The Band, which became Martin Scorsese's movie *The Last Waltz*.

But by then, Paul Butterfield had hit the skids. He recorded only two more albums before his death, neither of them possessing the power of his first two. His final years became an odyssey through hospitals, rehab centers, and one-night music stands. Like many other musicians, Butterfield burned himself out on drugs and drink, but this simple explanation doesn't fully address his life as a man—to quote the Janis Joplin song written by his long-time friend Nick Gravenites—buried alive in the blues.

BY THE TIME ELVIN BISHOP CAME to Chicago, Paul Butterfield had been visiting blues clubs for several years. Paul's older brother, Peter, an Evanston-based painter, says, "In the context we grew up in, it isn't so amazing that a white middle-



Critics fully appreciated the sound—"at the highest possible volume"—of the Paul Butterfield Blues Band's debut album (near left). But its follow-up, *East-West* (far left), was more innovative, fusing the South Side blues with traditional Indian styles. "It was entirely eye-opening as to the possibilities of where you could go with essential blues structures," says rock writer Dave Marsh.

class kid would get involved in blues. Our parents were very open to things. My father was the oldest of eight and grew up in a sod house in Arizona before it was a state. My mother's father was an engineer who built bridges and dams, so she lived in several cities growing up. They had enormously varied life experiences, and their attitudes were passed on to us."

Peter Butterfield says his younger brother was "a bright kid with an antic sense of humor" who also had a sarcastic, "confrontational" side, as embodied in the statement adorning his smirking photo in the 1960 Lab School yearbook: "I think I am better than the people who are trying to reform me."

Growing up, both Butterfields attended Ray School in Hyde Park and took music lessons. Peter studied clarinet for seven years, but his interest in visual art won out over music when he enrolled at the U. of C. Paul studied classical flute with Walfrid Kujala, a Chicago Symphony flutist. Paul ostensibly attended the University of Illinois in Champaign, but he came home on weekends—often without his parents' knowledge—and eventually stayed in Chicago.

He began playing harmonica when he graduated from high school. "He'd sit out on the Point at 55th Street and play all day," Peter recalls. "It was almost an obsession." After a while, he worked up the nerve to ask to play at a club. In the notes to his 1973 album *Better Days*, Butterfield recalls the first time he took the stage:

"LIKE BENNY GOODMAN IN THE THIRTIES, PAUL BUTTERFIELD HAD AN INTEGRATED BAND AND IT WAS NO BIG DEAL. HE JUST WANTED GOOD PEOPLE."

"The first club I went into was Smitty's, at 35th and Indiana. I had a harmonica with me, and for some reason I thought I could play it. Of course, I couldn't. Everybody there was saying, 'Yeah, go ahead, man, out of sight!' They were humoring me, but that was OK, because if they had said, 'Please, man, come on. Stop,' I might never have gone on."

Butterfield soon became a regular with the Little Smokey Smothers Revue. "I was driving on Woodlawn near 53rd," Smothers says of their first meeting, "and I saw a guy walking down the street playing harmonica in the rain. I told him to get in the car and play me a little. He wound up

playing in my band at the Blue Flame."

Drummer Sam Lay recalls that period. "People would say, 'Man, that white boy sounds like Little Walter,'" the harmonica player for Muddy Waters. "We'd have blacks coming to the door asking, 'Is that white boy going to be playing tonight?' People were coming just to hear and see the white kid who could play blues harmonica. He was fascinating to them."

to be the first one to turn him on." When they were able to get inside, he says, they were treated "politely but with curiosity. The people were just as curious about us as we were about them. Paul had a cultural advantage. He knew black families because he lived in Hyde Park and his parents were in that circle."

In 1961, when pianist Mark Naftalin came to the U. of C. from Minnesota,



The Paul Butterfield Blues Band, at its creative peak in 1966. From left: standing, bassist Jerome Arnold, guitarist Mike Bloomfield, keyboardist Mark Naftalin, and guitarist Elvin Bishop; seated, harmonica player Butterfield, drummer Billy Davenport

BUTTERFIELD'S FIRST MUSICAL partner, songwriter Nick Gravenites, arrived at the University of Chicago by way of the Loop's Central YMCA High School. Gravenites, four years older than Butterfield, grew up near 35th Street and Archer Avenue, where his family owned a Greek sweet shop. As a youth, he says, he "didn't even know Hyde Park existed."

The two started hitting blues clubs regularly. "I looked 21, so I could get in," Gravenites says. "Paul had to hang outside. He was a sweet young kid, but I had some gangster characteristics. I'd be armed, puffing on weed, dropping pills. He'd ask me for reefer, but I didn't want

Butterfield and Bishop were already known on campus. "The university sponsored these informal Wednesday night get-togethers in one of the dorms," Naftalin recalls. "They called them twist parties; someone must have figured, if there was music, kids must be doing the twist. As time went on, more people showed up; musicians started coming." To accommodate the overflow crowds, the university moved the event to Ida Noyes Hall. Butterfield and guitarist Bishop were center stage, playing with the Wilson brothers, two musicians from the neighborhood who had a shoe repair shop. Naftalin found Butterfield (continued on page 102)

“intimidating” but would sometimes “bash away” on a piano near the stage.

“We played at lots of places,” Bishop recalls. “We’d play at parties at people’s houses. Sometimes while people were in the other rooms, we’d sneak back to the freezer, pull out steaks, and toss them out the window to be picked up later.”

Butterfield and Bishop often spent their daytime hours at the Fret Shop, a music store on 57th Street where folk-music enthusiasts congregated. Ed Holstein, who like his brother Fred became a prominent folk musician in the 1960s and 1970s, was 13 when he first saw them at the store with a guitarist from the North Shore named Mike Bloomfield. Butterfield was “one of the

Holstein, who played across Wells Street at the Earl of Old Town, recalls the block’s vibrancy. “On Monday nights, every joint was packed. O’Rourke’s was on Wells then, and Second City was around the corner on Wisconsin.” On Butterfield’s nights off, Big John’s would play host to Little Walter, Howlin’ Wolf, and other blues players from the South Side. Playing up the street was another blues band, featuring young white players Steve Miller, Charlie Musselwhite, and Mike Bloomfield.

Doors were also opening for Butterfield, who signed a contract with Elektra Records—just before he received a draft notice. But Virginia McEwan (now Wald), a high-school friend and a wait-

early sixties, Court says, with the intention of doing something “small and tasty.” With Grossman cutting deals and Court producing records, what they did turned into something very big—and very sweet to some, very bitter to others.

For Paul Butterfield, it was both. Grossman, who represented Peter, Paul and Mary, Odetta, and the young Bob Dylan, arranged for the Butterfield Blues Band to back Dylan at Newport. The singer’s amplified performance outraged folk purists, but by nightfall, Grossman had signed Butterfield to his roster.

While the band was in New York recording its first album, Mark Naftalin, enrolled at the Mannes College of Music there, went to see his friends play at the

BUTTERFIELD’S PARENTS LIVED JUST BLOCKS AWAY FROM HIM, BUT HE NEVER INTRODUCED THEM TO HIS WIFE, VIRGINIA. NOT EVEN AFTER SHE BECAME PREGNANT.

cool kids,” Holstein says. “They’d talk excitedly about the clubs they had gone to and which blues guys they had met. They talked about the blues with such passion. Remember, this is when other people were listening to ‘Michael, Row the Boat Ashore.’”

WHILE HIS CAREER WAS ROLLING, Paul Butterfield was suffering. His girlfriend became terminally ill with cancer and returned to her home in California, and the 20-year-old Butterfield moved in with her family while working as a security guard. He stayed for most of a year until she died.

Back in Chicago, he considered giving up music and took a job as a commercial artist, until the manager of a North Side club called to ask if he had a band that could play over the weekend. Butterfield contacted Elvin Bishop and Howlin’ Wolf’s drummer Sam Lay, who in turn recruited bassist Jerome Arnold. The Butterfield Blues Band’s first performance was also its first rehearsal, Lay says, but soon, Big John’s at North Avenue and Wells Street became the hottest club in the city.

Butterfield’s band started playing weekends and soon did four nights a week: “Six sets a night, seven on Saturday, for two years,” says Bishop of the grueling schedule. “It was a great way to learn your chops.” Folksinger Fred

ress at Big John’s, provided a solution. “The whole purpose of our getting married was so Paul could avoid the draft,” she says. “It was my idea—I grew up with beatnik parents. I wasn’t in love with Paul, but I cared for him a lot. I didn’t want him to have to go to Vietnam.”

Butterfield’s new marital status earned him a deferment, but while he moved into a rooming house at 53rd Street and Dorchester Avenue, she kept her apartment on the North Side. Butterfield’s parents lived just blocks away from him, but he never introduced them to his wife: “I’d hear their voices over the intercom in their building, but I never met them,” Wald says. Not even after she became pregnant.

After a glowing article about Butterfield appeared in *Down Beat*, she says, “Paul became totally arrogant,” and when he left on his first concert tour, she stayed behind. By the time she was pushing their infant son, Gabriel, down her North Side street in a stroller, they could hear Paul’s voice belting out “Born in Chicago” from apartment windows.

IN 1965 ALBERT GROSSMAN, A Chicago Housing Authority manager turned music business agent, booked the Butterfield Blues Band to play the Newport Folk Festival. Grossman and his business partner John Court, from Glenview, moved to New York in the

Cafe Au Go Go. Butterfield had added guitarist Bloomfield to the lineup and invited Naftalin to play organ on the album. When the tour for the album began, Mannes was short one student.

The album, *The Paul Butterfield Blues Band*, bore an intriguing legend: “We suggest that you play this record at the highest possible volume in order to fully appreciate the sound.” Critics fully appreciated it: “Paul Butterfield’s harmonica sorties against the surging heavily amplified rhythm of drums, electric guitar, organ and bass are without parallel in blues or jazz,” wrote Robert Shelton in *The New York Times*.

IN BOSTON THE BAND SUFFERED its first casualty. Drummer Sam Lay was stricken with pneumonia and pleurisy and was unable to continue the tour. Butterfield called home and invited Billy Davenport to join up. Davenport had gotten his start at nine when he found a pair of drumsticks in an alley near 35th and Dearborn Streets. At 12, he was hustling change, playing a trash can near Comiskey Park, and his father saved for two months to buy him a snare drum. Trained in swing, the Wendell Phillips High School graduate was perfect for the Butterfield Blues Band, which was already pushing the boundaries of the blues in concert.

“I had never played with a [racially]

mixed band," Davenport says. "Going on the road with a mixed band, I was skeptical." But he didn't tell Butterfield that—he didn't have to. "Paul said, 'Billy, where you can't go, we *won't* go.' If he hadn't said that, I wouldn't have gone. What Benny Goodman was in the thirties, Paul Butterfield was in the blues. He had an integrated band and it was no big deal. He just wanted good people."

Davenport also appreciated Butterfield's financial deal. In other bands, the leader would pocket most of the money and pay a small fee to his backup musicians. With Butterfield, Davenport says, "we all split it 50-50. If he got a dollar, I got a dollar."

For two years, Davenport toured with the band until he succumbed to the grueling pace, returned home to Chicago, and took a job as an emergency room technician at Mount Sinai Hospital, where he worked for 25 years. But playing with Butterfield, he saw the spread of the blues. "The first time we went through L.A., we stopped to see B. B. King and there weren't but ten people there," he says. "The next time he came through, there were lines outside waiting to get in."

IN THE EARLY SIXTIES, JOHN Court and Albert Grossman began spending weekends near Woodstock, an artsy hamlet in upstate New York, and eventually Court and Grossman bought houses there. Dylan went to visit, and he, too, decided to stay. The area began to attract a variety of artists and musicians. As Grossman expanded his stable of musical properties to include Janis Joplin, Richie Havens, and Gordon Lightfoot, he acquired real-estate properties in nearby Bearsville and prepared to expand his empire with a recording studio, theatre, and two restaurants. By word of mouth, news quickly spread that Woodstock was a musicians' mecca.

In 1966, the Butterfield Blues Band released its second album, *East-West*. In the cover photo, the band looks tough and gritty, but anyone who recognized the Museum of Science and Industry in the background saw a different picture.

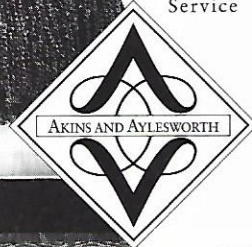
The title song was a long instrumental composed by Bloomfield and Gravenites incorporating traditional Indian styles. Soon the band found a devoted following in San Francisco, where concerts and LSD were becoming a popular mix. "The

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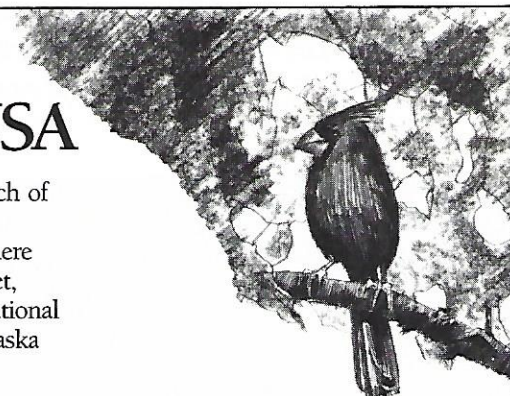
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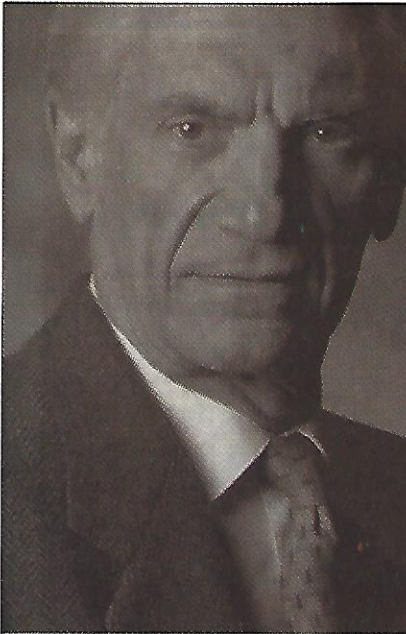
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Buried Alive

music the Butterfield band was playing was far more sophisticated than what the San Francisco bands were doing," says Dave Marsh, a veteran critic who has written extensively on The Who, Bruce Springsteen, and Woody Guthrie. "It was entirely eye-opening as to the possibilities of where you could go with essential blues structures." It also opened the eyes of the up-and-coming promoter Bill Graham, who was gratified by the sellout crowds Butterfield brought to his hall, the Fillmore—soon to become the hottest rock venue in the country. At the band's urging, Graham would book Muddy Waters, Little Walter, Howlin' Wolf, and other musicians from Chicago.

If *East-West* was the crossroads of the blues and the psychedelic, it was also a crossroads for the band. Though it sold nearly twice as well as the first album, *East-West* reached only number 65 on the popular-album chart, according to *The New Grove Dictionary of American Music*. Over Butterfield's protests, Bloomfield quit to start his own group, Electric Flag. Although they would reunite briefly in Chicago for a 1969 concert and an album called *Fathers and Sons*, featuring two generations of blues players, Bloomfield stayed west while Butterfield headed east to Woodstock.

To offset the loss, Butterfield recruited new horn players including David Sanborn for his next album, *The Resurrection of Pigboy Crabshaw*, whose title referred to Elvin Bishop's nickname and his restoration as lead guitarist. From the original six-piece lineup, only Bishop, Naftalin, and Butterfield remained, but the new group stormed the Monterey Pop Festival, and the album influenced the coming wave of jazz-rock bands such as Blood, Sweat and Tears and the Chicago Transit Authority. But Butterfield had set a high standard, and Bishop and Naftalin left the next year. "I prided myself on being a team player," Bishop says, "but I had a desire to do things that were very close to my heart instead of just reasonably close." Naftalin's reasons were simpler: After two and a half years of travel, "I had become weary of living on the road."

IN 1969, PAUL BUTTERFIELD played before what was then the largest concert audience in history—the Woodstock music festival, held about 50 miles south of where he and most of his bandmates lived. Near the end of the year,

Butterfield remarried, and his new wife, Kathryn, soon gave birth to his second son, Lee.

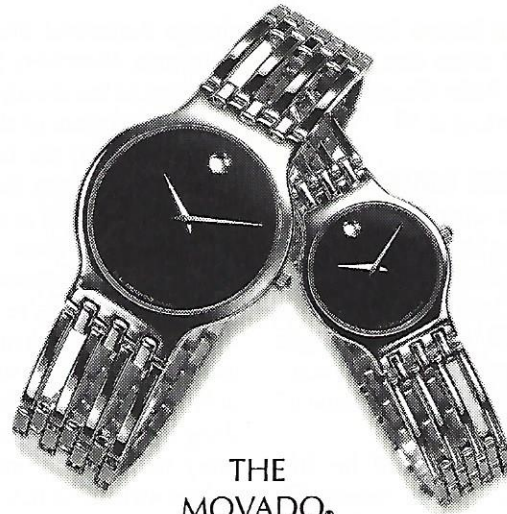
Butterfield released four albums on Elektra with his big band in the late sixties and early seventies, but his harmonica was lost among the horns. Following numerous personnel changes, his manager, Grossman, forced him to dissolve the group, which was no longer profitable. "Albert had made Paul a huge record deal with Warner Brothers," which was affiliated with Grossman's Bearsville label, says Gravenites, who was also a Grossman client. "He told him, 'I'll give the money to you, but I won't give it to [the other band members]. If you take it—you just you—you can keep it. If you split it with the band, they've got to pay off their debt to me.'" Paying their debt—consisting of expenses typically covered by management—would have wiped out the funds from Butterfield's deal, Gravenites says.

"Paul was begging and pleading with him not to do that," says Gravenites. In the end, though, "Paul took the money."

Paul and Kathy Butterfield moved to a house in Bearsville that Peter Butterfield remembers as "idyllic." They had a young son, two dogs, a couple of horses. But in the garden of Woodstock, the forbidden fruit was drugs, and Butterfield took a bite. Butterfield was also badly shaken by the deaths of his parents, and within a few years, the couple divorced and had to sell their house. Kathy Butterfield did not comment for this article.

His new band was called Better Days, but the name didn't fit his career. From 1973 to 1975, it recorded three albums on Bearsville. Although Butterfield was still a harmonica virtuoso, the music he created in his early 30s lacked the depth and originality he had revealed a decade earlier. Gabe Butterfield, Paul's first son, says of his father's life in Bearsville, "He got into the fame he had, settled in, and lost track of what he wanted to do."

In 1980, while working on his first album in five years, Butterfield became ill with peritonitis, an abdominal infection caused by a perforated bowel. He required multiple surgeries and wore a colostomy bag for almost a year. "It was sad," says Ian Kimmet, a friend of Butterfield's who was Grossman's aide. "He'd come back looking totally worn out. But in a few days, he'd have that smile on his face. He'd been told to avoid spicy foods, but he'd just chuckle."



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It couldn't have helped Butterfield's morale to learn at about that time that his former partner Mike Bloomfield had died of a drug overdose at 37.

SOMETIME DURING THOSE YEARS—no one is sure just when—Paul Butterfield started abusing hard drugs. Naftalin had known Butterfield as a “pot and a beer guy.” John Court, who split from Grossman in 1969, says he “thought Butterfield's real problem was Cuervo Gold,” but says drugs were “de rigueur” in Woodstock in those days.

For the last five years of his life, Butterfield was addicted to heroin. He tried desperately to kick it; his brother, Peter, says he participated in at least four rehab programs. Once he went to live with Peter's family in Evanston, attempting unsuccessfully to go cold turkey.

Butterfield's first wife, Virginia Wald, believes he became addicted to painkillers in the hospital. “Paul would use his charm on the nurses and doctors to get extra pills. He joked about how ironic it was that with all the things he had tried, he'd become addicted that way.”

Perhaps most remarkable about Butterfield's last years is that he never lost his musical ability. “Despite the fact that his life was a mess, his harmonica playing kept on improving,” Peter says. “The thing I really enjoyed was the way he played with and against the rhythm. On his later albums, there are some solos that are wonderfully self-contained melodic statements. More than a collage of riffs, they're like little musical essays, with a beginning, middle, and end.” Naftalin joined Butterfield onstage at the 20th anniversary of the Fillmore in 1985, and says Butterfield played as well as ever. “The last time I saw him alive was in late 1986,” Wald says. “He was doubled over in pain before the show, but he gave a brilliant performance.”

TODAY, PETER BUTTERFIELD AC-knowledges that the music business contributed to his brother's decline, calling it “a destructive way of life. The only reason to tour is to create an underpinning for your records. If your records aren't selling, all you get is the grind. I think it had a terribly wearing effect on Paul.”

Gravenites adds that a record contract is “a form of indentured servitude.” Naftalin, whose independent label Winner Records recently released two CDs of

vintage Butterfield Blues Band live performances, *Strawberry Jam* and *East-West Live*, says he has already paid more in royalties to members of the band than they received during the band's heyday. His own earnings from the first Butterfield album totaled \$195 in session fees.

Music critic Dave Marsh calls drug addiction “an occupational hazard of the music business. You're asked to do things that require you not to sleep, not to take care of yourself. In some ways, it's the only means to survive. The pathetic thing is that the artists become prey for every thief on the one hand and every jackass with an M.B.A. on the other.”

“All occupations are susceptible to drug abuse,” says Elvin Bishop, who says he has been clean for eight years. “But there are only a few where you can get away with it. The average plumber couldn't stay as high as we did and keep his job. Basically, you either do it to yourself or you don't. I'm talking like I'm all wise, but I had a hell of a problem. I had a hit song [“Fooled Around and Fell in Love”] at an advanced age. But it was after I had the hit that my usage got out of control.”

“Everywhere Paul went, people wanted to buy him a drink or give him drugs,” says Wald, who recalls a dinner out before Butterfield was undergoing treatment. “The chef sent out a special order of potatoes in the shape of a banjo, because he was a banjo player. I realized then that Paul would never be able to overcome the drug stuff until he could stop being Paul Butterfield. He was just as addicted to being Paul Butterfield as he was to drugs.” John Court observes that the combination of celebrity and life on the road is “an untenable proposition that makes drugs increasingly attractive. It's a way to leave your room without leaving your room.”

ALTHOUGH PAUL BUTTERFIELD'S relatives and friends knew his chances of beating addiction were slim, they were still surprised by his death. Peter Butterfield's gauge of his brother's well-being was based on whether Paul called in the middle of the night, or at a more reasonable hour, as he had been doing for some time before his death.

The night before he died, Butterfield called his son Gabe. “He sounded upbeat,” Gabe says. “He was looking forward to seeing me and Lee after he played a few more dates.” Butterfield had

just finished working on an HBO special with B. B. King. In the program, his son recalls, “he looks happy and healthy. That was two weeks before his death.”

Butterfield died on May 4, 1987. The Los Angeles County coroner ruled his death an accident caused by acute multiple drug intoxication, with high levels of alcohol, codeine, and morphine. Butterfield apparently tried to leave his room without leaving his room once more, and he ended up leaving for good.

PETER BUTTERFIELD SAYS PAUL'S funeral was “touching but bizarre.” Held at a chapel in Westwood, the service, attended by about 200, had elements of Buddhism and Native American rituals, two recent interests of those close to Paul. Oddly, Butterfield himself—or, rather, his body—made a characteristically late entrance, delayed for several hours by the autopsy.

Peter Butterfield was surprised by how many people, especially women, seemed to know his brother as no one else did. “Paul kept his life compartmentalized. Someone told me he once said his fantasy was to have all the people he loved living with him. This may sound like dime-store pop psychology, but I think that was an expression of Paul's wish to integrate his own personality.”

Today, both sons follow in their father's footsteps—to a degree. Although Gabe says their father never pushed them into music, both he and Lee are musicians. Gabe is a songwriter and drummer; Lee plays electric bass. Gabe, who grew up in California and Washington, now lives in Bearsville; Lee, born near Bearsville and raised in California, recently moved to New York City. Gabe says he and his brother are good friends.

His father, he says, “lives on in our hearts and his spirit carries on.” Gabe's uncle Peter has a less sanguine view. “I would rather have my brother still alive,” he says, “than be a dead legendary blues harmonica player.”

But that's what Paul Butterfield is. And the people who played with him still marvel at his prowess. “Butterfield was special. He was as good as anybody you could ever find,” says Sam Lay. Mark Naftalin recalls how “he would lift the music every time he came back on his harp.” They remember the passion he poured into the music. Says Nick Gravenites, “Butter gave blood.” ■